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JACK ANDERSON

Odd Characters May Have Aided Ex-CIA Agents

A cast of colorful characters that could have stepped out of a James Bond movie, apparently helped ex-CIA agents Frank Terpil and Ed Wilson with the British end of their illicit international arms smuggling operation.

The two American renegades, who jumped bail after indictment on gun-running charges in this country and are now hiding out abroad, found associates to their liking in the ranks of British businessmen, intelligence officers and assorted underworld denizens. Their activities are described by sources and in secret Justice Department reports seen by my associate Dale Van Atta.

The overseas branch of Terpil, Wilson & Co. included these central figures and bit players:

- An "Odd Job" type named Mustafa, the bodyguard of a Libyan intelligence official who was Terpil's contact with Muammar Qaddafi. Mustafa is 6 foot 8, weighs 300 pounds, has a black belt in karate and sports claw marks on his face from an encounter with a lion. He acts as food taster for his employer.

- David Jenner, a Briton who fronted—perhaps unwittingly—for Terpil in the purchase of the Hunters Lodge hotel in Crewe, a dreary rail center in the industrial region of west central England. "The purpose of the acquisition was to organize an underground railroad for hiding wealthy organized crime figures along with world terrorists," one Justice Department report states.

- Using a Liberian corporation as a front, Terpil paid \$500,000 for the hotel in 1979, and immediately began construction of a \$1 million addition. The report says the Terpil "network" . . . also engages in the unlawful international shipment of firearms and explosives between the United States, England and the Third World, as well as providing a . . . refuge for wealthy criminals."

- Robin Braid-Taylor, a London-based arms merchant. According to a Terpil associate, it was Braid-Taylor's job to provide the official documents needed to export arms from Britain. In one deal, Terpil planned to pay Philippines officials \$56,000 to certify that a shipment of 10,000 machine guns was going to the Philippine military, when in fact they were to be diverted en route to a Caribbean destination.

- Braid-Taylor was aware he was selling the arms to Latin American right-wing revolutionaries.

- Samuel Cummings, a onetime CIA arms expert, born in Philadelphia but now an Irish citizen. He founded Interarms Co., one of the biggest munitions dealerships in the world.

- E. Ralph Warren, a retired British Army lieutenant-colonel. An associate of Cummings, "The Colonel" was Braid-Taylor's boss and the man who, according to Terpil, could "walk the paperwork through Whitehall," meaning he allegedly could fix things at the Foreign Office.

- A former British intelligence agent named McGowan, who introduced Terpil and Wilson to a covey of current and former British intelligence and counterintelligence officers who could be useful to their operation.

- An unidentified provincial cop, possibly in the Cheshire Constabulary. When a raid was planned on Terpil's hotel in Crewe, a Justice Department report notes, "Scotland Yard also advised that [one police officer] was on Jenner's payroll to keep activities at the hotel from being discovered."

- A desk clerk named Ben at the Elysee Hotel in London, another Terpil-Wilson pit stop. Like the Cheshire policeman, Ben ran interference for the gunrunners, making sure they weren't surprised by authorities or business rivals.